

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 13, 2009

Dear Colleague,

The recent financial turmoil on Wall Street that has had a ripple effect on Main Street and communities throughout the nation is a warning of what occurs when a country lives beyond its means for too long. With the U.S. national debt now exceeding \$10.6 trillion and each American owing nearly \$35,000 of this debt, the economic future of our nation depends upon our determination today to ensure that our good intentions do not come at the expense of the standard of living of our children, grandchildren, parents, and grandparents.

This is why we believe it is essential that President-elect Barack Obama is successful in his pledge to bring change to Washington by changing Congress' irresponsible spending habits.

The Obama "Plan for Restoring Fiscal Discipline" includes conducting an exhaustive line-by-line review of federal spending and eliminating government programs that are not performing or are wasteful or obsolete, paying for new spending commitments by cutting other programs, slashing pork barrel spending, rooting out redundancy, requiring federal contracts over \$25,000 be competitively bid, measuring program performance and enforcing goals, and demanding that new initiatives be selected on the basis of their merits, not through a political process that rewards lobbyists and campaign donors.

These are all commonsense proposals that should receive our bipartisan support.

As such, we want to give you advance notice we intend to object to consideration of any legislation that violates these common sense principles laid out by our new President:

- 1) Any new spending commitment authorized must be paid for by cutting other programs;
- 2) New programs should not duplicate existing programs;
- 3) Any federal contract or earmark costing more than \$25,000 must be competitively bid; and
- 4) All new programs must include independent and enforceable performance measurements.

This is not an exhaustive list of all of the reasons we may individually object to a particular bill or a unanimous consent agreement for consideration of legislation, but these will be the fundamental parameters by which we will evaluate all legislation.

Our intent is not to be obstacles, but rather to give you the courtesy of knowing how we can work together to accomplish our individual and collective goals and to cooperate with our new President to help him succeed with his plan for restoring fiscal discipline to Washington in a bi-partisan manner. We would look forward to working with you to try to pass your legislation that meets the goals set out in this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom', with a stylized, sweeping line above it.

Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', with a stylized, sweeping line above it.

John McCain  
United States Senator